

Culture portfolio

The culture portfolio, which constitutes 5% of your total class grade, is your opportunity to engage with Arab culture outside the classroom in order to improve your knowledge of the cultural and social contexts of Arabic.

This semester you are required to write **five** 250-word essays about cultural activities in which you've participated or researched. Each essay has to be about one of the following types of activities and each of the five types must be used once. The essays are due on the following dates:

<i>Culture Portfolio</i>	<i>Due Date</i>
<i>Entry # 1</i>	<i>Wednesday, Sept. 8</i>
<i>Entry # 2</i>	<i>Friday, Sept. 24</i>
<i>Entry # 3</i>	<i>Wednesday, Oct. 20</i>
<i>Entry # 4</i>	<i>Tuesday, November 9</i>
<i>Entry # 5</i>	<i>Tuesday, November 23</i>

Types of activities

❖ Free activity!

Write about a topic of your choice. Please discuss the topic with your instructor before you start writing about it.

❖ Film

Choose a film in Arabic and write about it. You can choose to attend a movie screening on campus, checkout a movie from the [Fine Arts Library](#), or rent a movie from local [video stores](#). The film must be in Arabic with English subtitles.

❖ Lecture

The Department of Middle Eastern Studies as well as other departments on campus will be organizing lecture series this semester. Attend one lecture that relates to Arab history, culture, literature, politics or any other relevant subject and write about it. You will be notified about lecture opportunities on campus.

❖ Short story

Read a translated short story and write about it. You can find anthologies of short stories at the [PCL](#).

❖ **Chat with a native speaker**

This is your opportunity to chat with a native speaker of Arabic and get personal insights about life in Arab societies. While most of the interview will be conducted in English, you should try as much as possible to incorporate the Arabic you've learned in talking to that person.

You can ask him/her about his/her life in the US, his/her home country and native culture, and his/her perceptions about certain topics that you're curious about. If you're related to native speakers of Arabic (grandma, father, mother etc.) try to talk to someone who comes from a different country. For example, if your parents are Palestinian, try to talk to someone from Egypt or North Africa and write in your essay about the differences/similarities between both cultures.

Questions to address in your culture entries

1. What were your preconceptions about the topic before you began working on it?
2. Describe the topic you're writing about: what is it about? Who is the author/speaker? Who are the main characters of the short story/film? What is about? How does it end?
3. Were there things you discovered for the first time?
4. Were there things that you changed your mind about after participating in this activity?

What will your instructor look for in grading?

1. Does your essay cover the required number of words?
2. How well was the essay written and presented?
3. Did you address all questions?
4. How well thought out were your answers?